DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 242 446 RC 014 144

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TITLE Outdoor Adventure Activities for New Student Orientation Programs.
PUB DATE [84]
NOTE 6p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adventure Education; College Students; *Experiential Learning; *Group Activities; Group Dynamics; Group Experience; Higher Education; Individual Development; *Outdoor Activities; Outdoor Education; *Physical Activities; Program Descriptions; Risk; *School Orientation; Student Adjustment; Student College Relationship
IDENTIFIERS PF Project

ABSTRACT

A college student orientation program is described which incorporates outdoor adventure activities. The purpose of the program is to challenge the participants and encourage cooperation between individuals. The two general categories of adventure activities used in this program are low risk (initiative games, nature walks, camping, and nature photography); and medium risk (cycling, backpacking, ropes courses, sailing/boating, and winter camping). Opportunities provided for students by this program include new and exciting experiences, development of cooperation and trust, interaction with the natural environment, socialization, and promotion of physical fitness. Among the reasons given for using the activities in this program are that they provide common experiences, stress interaction and cooperation, facilitate dialogue, encourage trust, break down social and psychological barriers, and provide experiential learning. Three important considerations when choosing outdoor adventure activities are: (1) establish goals and objectives; (2) design activities to fit the geographical and environmental setting; and (3) choose the types of adventure activities that the staff is qualified to handle. Six books are listed as resources for implementation. (EM)

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OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

FOR NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION Programs

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SUCCESS!
Utilization of Outdoor Adventure Activities
for
New Student Orientation Programs

"I can't imagine just coming to school and taking placement tests, listening to long winded speeches and walking from this building to that." This student's sentiments reflect what many new student Orientation programs have limited themselves to.

Three years ago a group of faculty and staff at our college formed a committee to explore alternative approaches to new student orientation. We all agreed that ten hours of testing, speeches, tours, picinics and meeting with advisors was a horrendous introduction to the college.

Each of us came to the committee with our own prespective on what an orientation program should hope to accomplish, but we shared one common goal - that the students should be given the opportunity to experience the satisfaction of both individual achievement and group process. We all believed that if students came away from orientation with a sense of their own unique potential and strength of cooperative activity, then we would have achieved that goal.

The primary vehicle we chose to incorporate into our orientation program was Outdoor Adventure Activities. Why did we chose these and what are they? I hope to answer these questions and provide you with opportunities for incorporating some of these activities into your programs.

Adventure is a human need, all of us demand adventure in our lives. We want change from the routine, we like to experience the unusual or new situation and we need opportunities for creative expression and excitement. "As we walked through the campus blindfolded we had to trust the people in front and help the person behind to think that there were one hundred plus people walking through the campus blindfolded in complete silence, with only their sense of touch to guide them is fantastic!"

Outdoor Adventure Activities include any recreational or educational experience that relates to a particular outdoor environment - (college campus, mountain, woods, rocks, water, snow, ice or caves.) The nature of these activities contain elements of exploration, excitement, suspense, chance/risk, elements of the unusual or unknown and, most importantly, they require an effort on the part of the participants. The major focus of Outdoor Adventure Activities is to challenge the participants and encourage cooperation between individuals rather than competition. There are three general catagories of Outdoor Adventure Activities and in our program we use activities from the first two catagories listed below.

I. TYPES OF OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

A. Low Risk Adventure Activities

These are activities in which there is very little danger to the individuals or fear of bodily harm. Example: Initiative games, nature walks, camping, fishing, nature photography.

B. Medium Risk Outdoor Adventure Activities

These activities provide a moderate amount of danger and risk of bodily harm. Examples: Cycling, backpacking, ropes course, winter camping and sailing-boating.

C. High Risk Outdoor Adventure Activities

These activities involve a potentially high degree of danger or possibility of injury or threat to the individuals safety. Examples: Rockclimbing, canoeing, kyaking, mountaineering, skiing, hang-gliding and running.

II. WHAT DO OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES PROVIDE FOR YOUR PROGRAM?

1. New and exciting experience for participants.
2. Provides opportunities to develop cooperation and trust.
3. Provides opportunities to interact with the natural enviroment.
4. Provides opportunities for socializing with other people in a different setting.
5. Promotes physical fitness and the development of mental and motor abilities in new and challenging ways.
6. Provides opportunities for success.
7. Provides opportunities to depart from the complexities of daily life.
8. Provides opportunities to learn and play in a refreshing new way.

III. WHY USE OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES FOR NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION PROGRAMS?

1. They provide a common experience for all participants.
2. They stress interaction, and cooperation with other individuals.
3. Introduces participants to the natural environment.
4. They facilitate or encourage dialogue among participants.
5. They encourage an attitude of trust.
6. They breakdown social and psychological barriers between participants.
7. They provide excellent experiential learning environments to promote and develop the participants knowledge of the particular activity, the natural environment or themselves.
8. They require a minimum financial investment.
9. They are fun!

A quote from one of our seniors who assisted in the first orientation program supports the change that occured after we introduced the adventure activities. "Students became more quickly acclimated and friendly this year than when I was a freshman. Instead of meeting only the people in the dorm or in their classes, new students interacted and shared experiences in common from their first days on campus."

Or better the response from one of the new students who participated, "As we gathered around the gym, I could tell by observing the instructors that something was going to be unusual. As we started the initiative games and rolled over people, I could see what it was doing. We were all working together and very quickly becoming acquainted with each other."

IV. CONSIDERATIONS IN CHOOSING THE TYPES OF OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR PROGRAM.

There are several important issues you should consider when incorporating these types of activities into your program.

The first thing you should do is to establish the goals and objectives you wish to accomplish with your orientation program so that you can choose the appropriate type of adventure activity. For example if you desire to provide a common experience for participants and to encourage interaction among the students then a good set of activities would be the incorporation of initiative games into the program. These particular activities are low risk and facilitate group interaction, group problem solving and break down

physical barriers between people.

The second consideration is to design your activities to fit the geographical and environmental setting you have available. If you have a lake or pond on campus or a large track of open space then utilize and design activities so that you can take advantage of this resource.

The third consideration is to choose the types of adventure activities that your staff is qualified to handle. If you are going to incorporate activities into your program, make sure you have someone qualified to present and supervise these activities.

Outdoor Adventure Activities can if properly utilized, enhance your new student orientation program. They can provide your students with opportunities to grow, to cooperate, trust and work toward a common goal. One student expressed the result of this experience very well. "Because of the activities that we participated in, it not only made us more at ease with classmates, but it also gave us a positive attitude of the college."

Resources for Implementation

1. Darst. Paul and Armstrong, George, Outdoor Adventure Activities For School and Recreation Programs. 1980
   Burgess Publishing Company, 7108 Ohms Lane, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55435.

2. Erickson, Susan Harris, Buck, The Adventure Book - A Curriculum guide to School Based Adventuring with Troubled Adolescents. 1980.
   Wilderness School Project, Box 2243, Goshen, Ct. 06756

3. Fluegelman, Andrew, More New Games. 1981
   Headlands Press Inc., Tiburon, California. 94920

4. Rogers, Robert J., Leading to Share - Sharing to Lead. 1979
   Journal Printing, Sudbury, Ontario.

5. Rohnke, Karl, Cowstails and Cobras - A Guide to Ropes Courses, Initative Games and Other Adventure Activities. 1977.
   Project Adventure, P.O. Box 157, Hamilton, MA. 01936

6. Simpson, Benjy, Initative Games 1978
   Colorado Outward Bound School, 945 Pennsylvania Street, Denver, Colorado 80203